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Colorado's Specialty Crop Industry Eligible for Funding

LAKEWOOD, Colo. – Colorado specialty crops range from perennial favorites like potatoes and onions to exciting innovators such as lavender and hops. To help develop and promote the state's specialty crops, the Colorado Department of Agriculture (CDA) is seeking proposals for the *Specialty Crops Block Grant Program*. Specialty crops are defined as fruits and vegetables, dried fruits, and nursery crops including floriculture and sod.

“Colorado produces a wide variety of fruits, vegetables and horticultural products,” said Casey Palmer, CDA Marketing Specialist. “This grant program helps develop and promote these unique crops.”

Colorado's specialty crops represent approximately 10 percent of Colorado's total agricultural cash receipts. In 2011, cash receipts from specialty crops totaled more than \$735 million.

The grant program is funded through the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) which partners with state departments of agriculture to enhance the competitiveness of specialty crop producers in areas such as marketing, promotion, education, research, trade and nutrition.

“The department must submit a request outlining projects to the USDA in order to receive these funds,” continued Palmer. “This application process will help determine which projects are included in our application to the USDA.”

CDA anticipates that approximately \$640,000 will be available, with approved projects starting early in 2014. Producer groups, organizations, and associations, as well as state and local organizations, academia and other specialty crops stakeholders are eligible to apply either as single entities or in combined efforts. Proposals submitted by individual producers must demonstrate that the potential impact of the project will accrue to a broader group of similar producers, region or industry segment.

Proposals must be received by close of business (4:30pm) on May 1, 2013. For more information and an application, visit www.colorado.gov/ag/specialtycropgrant or call (303) 239-4123.

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